

I Corinthians - Lesson 05

I Corinthians Chapter 5

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Memory verses for this week: *1 Pet 1:24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 1 Pet 1:25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

Introduction: Last week in Chapter 4, we learned how that the child of God will one day give an account of all the things we have done in our body. Paul encouraged the church to follow after Christ, and not after men which so many of them had done. At the end of the chapter, he promised to send young Timothy to them to exhort and encourage them in the work there in Corinth. This week we are getting into church discipline. This is not practiced by most churches today, but it is certainly biblical. The key is for it to be done properly and without damaging the offender if it is possible. We are warned not to judge another several times in the Word of God.

Rom 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

Rom 2:2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

Rom 2:3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

James 4:11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

James 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

If you read these verses, you might ask how can anyone enforce church discipline. The key is to use discernment and make wise choices. When we follow God's rules, the person in their sin can be brought back to a place of forgiveness if they will seek God and turn from their error.

I. The Sin Identified in the Church

1 Cor 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such

fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

1 Cor 5:2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

We see that the sin that was mentioned here is fornication. The Corinthians were not demonstrating the power of God in their lives by living by the spirit. If we do not take up our cross each day and put the old man to death, he will rule over us. One of the members of the church was living in immoral relations with his step-mother. Paul said this was so bad that it was not so much named among the Gentiles. The Gentiles here have reference to godless unsaved people. And he is saying they would turn in shame from such sin. Yet these Corinthians not only knew of this and did nothing.

Rather, they seemed to be puffed up about it rather than mourning. Now the ones committing the sin were the guilty ones, but the church seemed indifferent towards it and acted as if nothing wrong was going on. This is common in churches today. Recently, I read where there is much debate concerning the Methodist decision to condemn homosexuality as sin and not allow "gay preachers" and leaders. When the Bible clearly teaches against this sin, what else would allow someone to think this is correct but to turn their back on God and His teachings and to live as a carnal Christian. These in the church there at Corinth seemed more concerned over which church leader to follow than to worry about following God's rules and principles.

1 Cor 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1 Cor 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Sexual sins such as fornication and adultery were forbidden both in the Old and New Testaments.

Exo 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Mat 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Mat 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Jesus' teaching was that we are not to even think of having adultery with a woman, much less perform the act. I heard a psychologist on the radio say that when he read these verses, it was then that he decided that there was nothing to Christianity. He said to rate looking upon a woman with lust as the same as performing the act made him realize that Jesus was a man with distorted values. This man did not comprehend what Jesus was trying to say at all. He was trying to make us understand that even evil thoughts themselves are sin.

This was not to say that adultery performed in the heart would have the same devastating effect as the actual sin act. But we are condemned already when we think like this, and Jesus wanted us to realize the seriousness of thinking evil in the heart. From the treasures of the heart is where both good and bad begin. Sexual sins carry a heavy price to a Christian since we are bought with a price and the Holy Spirit lives within us. To perform sexual sins with our body involves the Holy Spirit in this, and we are to keep our bodies holy like Jesus.

*1 Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
1 Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
1 Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

The local church can exist in a world of sin, but it cannot prosper when a world of sin is brought into the church. The Church at Corinth was located in the most sinful city in the Roman Empire, and they had allowed that sin to come into the Church. They were boasting in men, when they should have been concerned about the gross immorality that had come into the Church.

J. Vernon McGee had an insightful comment on this topic in his commentary on I. Corinthians.

“This needed to be handled with church discipline. There was no doubt about this being sin. It is not a questionable matter. It was such a horrible sin that it was not practiced by the Gentiles outside the church. I would like to say something to our present generation. Living together without being married is sin in God's sight. It makes no difference what public opinion says about it or how many people are practicing it. The Word of God calls this sin, and there is not other way one can look at it.

It is not a questionable sin as far as the Word of God is concerned. The church in Corinth did not need to establish the fact that the man was living in sin. Their error was that they tolerated it. They condoned the sin by doing nothing about it. They compromised, and that is the worst thing they could have done. You can put his down as an axiom: A pure church is a powerful church; an impure church

is a paralyzed church. You can look around you at churches today and see whether or not that is true.”

One final comment on this sin of adultery. Women who dress immodestly and cause men to lust after them are guilty also. We are to try our best to live in such a way to help others live Godly lives that are separated unto the Lord.

II. The Solution to the Problem

1 Cor 5:3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

Paul as a spiritual leader had already passed judgment. He did not remain neutral, but boldly condemned this sin. While not there present in his body, he was present in spirit and had judged this matter. Paul knew the church needed to deal with the issue, and refuse to act like nothing was going on. Sometimes this is difficult when you have to approach a brother or sister in Christ who are outwardly living in sin. But when we do it with the spirit of love and concern, it makes a big difference. To come in harsh judgment is to not see things accurately. Except for the grace of God, the roles could easily be reversed.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Gal 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

When a member is acting disorderly and refuses to accept counsel and refuses to repent of their evil, the church is to withdraw themselves from those who are walking disorderly. The doctrines are clear in God's Word, and we are to live by these rules and commandments.

2 Th 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

2 Th 3:7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

1 Cor 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Cor 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The Church was commanded to pass judgment. Many people seem to think that a church cannot expel members. This verse refutes that idea.

1 Tim. 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Notice that it says when “ye are gathered together”. Who is the “ye”? It is the church of course. Not the preacher, not the pope, not some presbytery that comes together to pass down judgment. It was to be done when the church came together in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. It says that if the person will not hear counsel, to turn that one (in this case the fornicator) over to the devil for the destruction of the flesh. This seems harsh, but look at the reason. That the flesh may be destroyed but the spirit saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

I believe many have lived sin shortened lives due to refusing to obey the chastening hand of the Lord. Our flesh wants us to call all the shots and do what we want to do, but we must bring the flesh under subjection that we might live a life that glorifies and honors God. When a person will not repent, the sinner is turned over to Satan. Exclusion is a serious matter, but it does not affect the excluded members soul. The bible gives clear Scriptural Order about how a church offender is to be dealt with BEFORE he or she is brought before the church.

They are not to be dealt with unexpectedly. He or she should be contacted at least twice before the matter is ever brought before the church. Usually this is done by the pastor and one of the deacons of the church.

Mat 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Mat 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

The pastor should take the lead in trying to get things worked out with the one who has sinned.

1 Pet 5:3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Ezek 34:4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed

that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

Ezek 34:5 And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

The church members should take an active part in helping to restore the fallen brother or sister in Christ. When we realize how easy it is to fall, we will want to help the one who has been deceived by Satan.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Gal 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

If the offender does not respond and repent, the church is to take the final action. When a member is excluded, we are to withdraw fellowship until that person repents and acknowledges their error and seeks forgiveness. When that person does get right, we should all be willing to accept the one back into the fold and rejoice that they have gotten right with the Lord.

Mat 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Mat 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

Mat 18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

III. The Churches Responsibility

1 Cor 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

1 Cor 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

1 Cor 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Leaven speaks of sin. Paul tells them that the glorying that they were doing over the matter was not good. They acted as if there was nothing to worry about... all sin is covered by the blood of Christ and we can just live and rejoice that we are under grace rather than the law. That may sound good, but we are to give an account of all things we do in the body after we are saved. We read earlier how we are to glorify God with our bodies which were bought with a price.... The shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The warning here is that if you don't eliminate sin and evil from within, it will spread. When an epidemic breaks out, they always quarantine those that are sick that others will not contract the disease. That is similar to how sin can spread if not stopped in the church. To make this warning more impressive, Paul uses the example of the two Old Testament feasts of Israel. The first feast was the passover, which was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month.

Exo 12:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

Exo 12:2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

Exo 12:3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:

Exo 12:4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

Exo 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

Exo 12:6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

Exo 12:7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

Exo 12:8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Exo 12:9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

Exo 12:10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

Exo 12:11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover.

Immediately following the Passover, for the next seven days, they had the feast of unleavened bread. During those days, no leaven was to be used or kept in the house for any reason.

Lev 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

Lev 23:7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Lev 23:8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Paul explains that for the New Testament age, our passover is Christ. Our new life begins when we believe on Christ and are cleansed by His blood. This cleansing should be followed in a spiritual way by the feast of unleavened bread, meaning a separated walk in this life by the redeemed sinner.

Church discipline has a three fold purpose.

- (1) To remove the defilement of sin.
- (2) It will restrain others.

1 Tim. 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

- (3) It is always hoped that it will bring about the repentance of the sinning member. It did in this case.

2 Cor. 2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

1 Cor 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

1 Cor 5:10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

1 Cor 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

Paul explains to the believers that people outside the Church who live this way

are to be avoided.

Eph. 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Certainly, we cannot avoid contact with such people in this world. We would have to go out of this world to do that, but we can avoid keeping company with them or having fellowship with them. We need to fellowship with people with like beliefs and those that will encourage us on to serve the Lord.

1 Cor 5:12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

1 Cor 5:13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

It is evident that in some previous communication, the apostle had advised them to not fellowship with fornicators. Either they misunderstood the message or thought Paul perhaps meant to have nothing to do with unsaved people who were involved in immorality. Paul certainly did not mean this. Christ was always going out in the highways and by ways finding the sinners and preaching the gospel unto them.

They found fault with Christ because he was willing to sit in the houses of sinners and to sit with winebibbers and publicans. But Christ loves all mankind, and came that whosoever will may come to experience life, and experience it more abundantly. Until we know Christ, we don't even know what true living is all about.

While we should be always taking every opportunity to reach the lost, we must be careful not to get so comfortable with them that they guide us into wrong. In Deuteronomy, the bible warns to not meddle with the evil ones.

Deu 2:1 Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.

Deu 2:2 And the LORD spake unto me, saying,

Deu 2:3 Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.

Deu 2:4 And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore:

Deu 2:5 Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.

Deu 2:6 Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye

*shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.
Deu 2:7 For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.*

So we need to find that perfect balance where we witness to all, but live a Godly separated life that keeps us from following the ways of the world. It takes discretion and seeking God's Will to do the very thing God would have us to do. But when Christians sin and refuse to repent, it says in verse 11 that we are to not eat a meal with them. This refusing to have a part with them will hopefully cause them to come to themselves and correct the error of their ways.

When the prodigal son found himself in a far away land eating husks with the pigs, the bible said that "when he came to himself", he then found direction. Sometimes we have to wander far away before we realize that God meant all the rules and commandments for our own good. When we do find this out, God is standing there looking for us to come back, just like the prodigal son's father.

Luke 15:14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

Luke 15:15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

Luke 15:16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

Luke 15:17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

Luke 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

Luke 15:19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

Luke 15:20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Luke 15:21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Luke 15:22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

Luke 15:23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

Luke 15:24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Simply put, we are not to keep company with a brother or sister who lives this way. He may be called a brother, but if he lives this way, he is not to be treated

as a brother. We are not to eat with such a person. This would keep us from socializing with them, and certainly this would keep us from eating the Lord's Supper with them. The Church is to judge those within its membership. The wicked are to be put out of the membership according to these verses. God will judge those outside the Church membership.

NOTE: When a person has been disciplined by the Church, then all of the members should avoid them. They should not sympathize with them, or listen to their complaints.

2 Thess. 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

"Note that man" means to mark him. This is in the imperative mood, which means that it is a command to be obeyed. "Have no company with him" means that he is to be avoided. This too is in the imperative mood. When a person has caused trouble in a Church, misbehaved, or disregarded the leadership of the pastor, he is to be avoided. Some leave the Church on their own, then they begin a courtship of other members that they think they can influence. They will call on the telephone, or visit with members, while they drop little hints that they have been wronged. Such people are only trying to destroy the Church to get even. Why should any obedient Christian keep company with them.

* Notes from E.L. Bynum added in May 2013.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

